

Beyond Boundaries: Advocating for Full- Scope OT Practice in Medication Management

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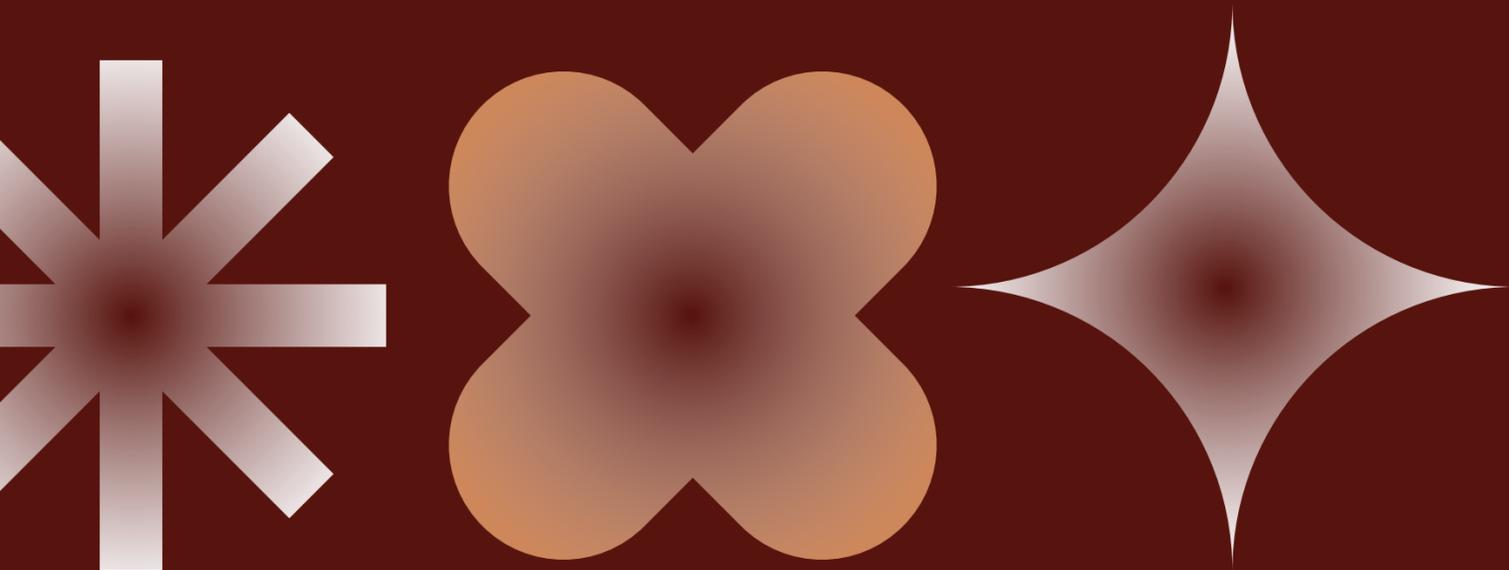
Learning Objectives

By the end of this presentation, you will be able to:

Understand the importance of internal professional advocacy

Identify how practice gaps were identified and addressed in medication management

Describe the process for new and revised official AOTA Documents



The Problem

Many clients in acute care were struggling with medication management after discharge, BUT OT practitioners were not addressing medication management in acute care.



Scope of the Problem

Understanding the costs of medication non-adherence in America

50%

of people do not take their medications as prescribed

125,000

preventable deaths annually in the US

\$500+ Billion

annual cost in avoidable healthcare costs

25%

of hospitalizations attributed to non-adherence



Case Study

- Nina, 46-year-old mother of two
- Diagnosed with heart disease, prescribed multiple medications
- Experienced stroke symptoms, hospitalized
- Stopped all medications due to side effects and confusion

The Gap: No one addressed her medication management skills

**OTPs already
have the
right skills
for med
management**

Compared to physicians, nurses, and pharmacists
occupational therapists demonstrate greater skills in:



Monitoring



**Learning
Strategies**



Persuasion



In 2017, only 25% of OTs consistently evaluated medication management.

Despite Perfect Skills, OTPs Weren't Engaging

(Schwartz & Smith, 2017; Schwartz & Richard, 2019)



Despite Perfect Skills, OTPs Weren't Engaging

Barriers: Lack of knowledge, unclear scope, limited resources. E.g.

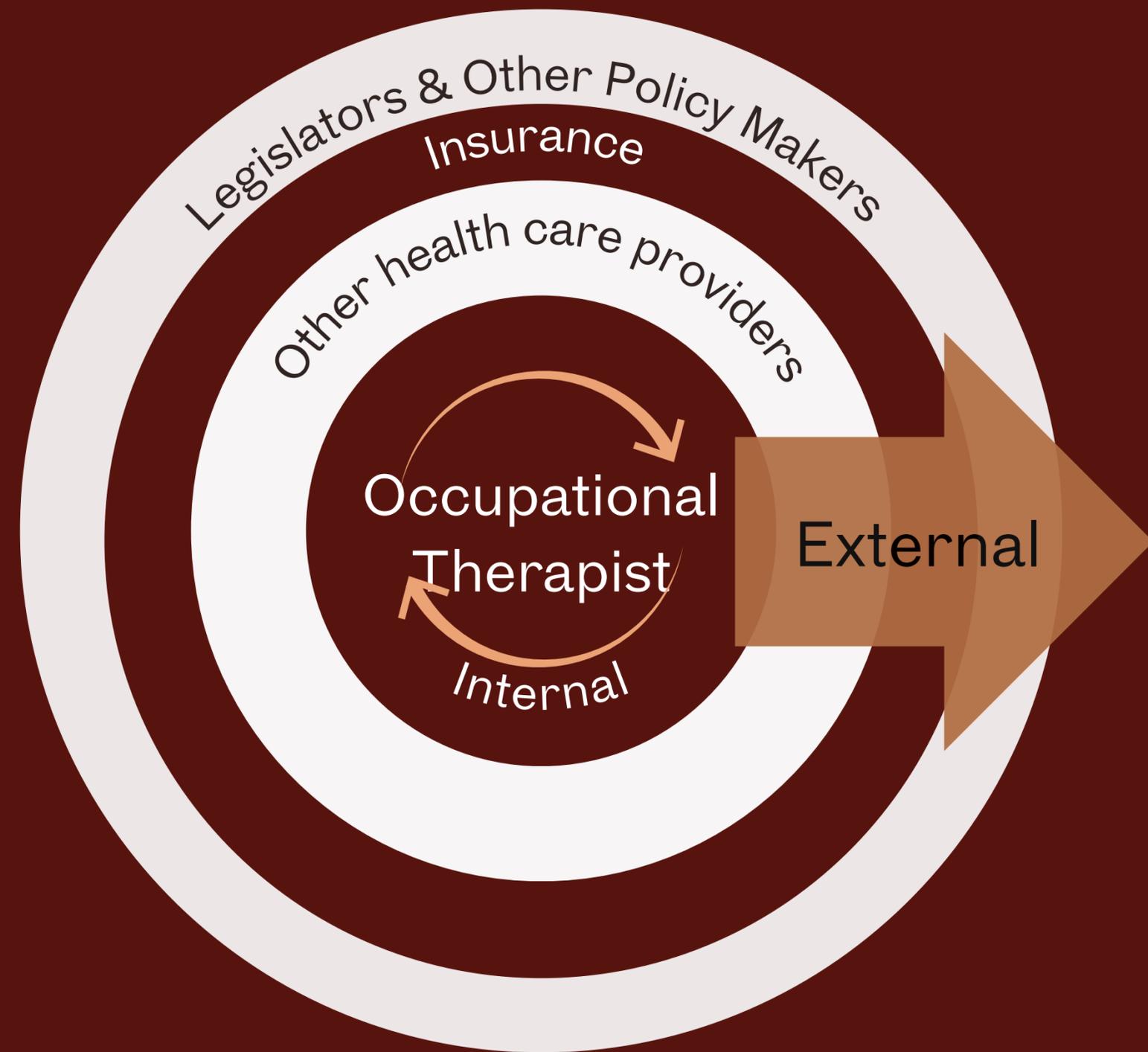
- 13 publications mentioning medication in AJOT
- 2 mentions in Pedretti's textbook (Pendleton & Schultz-Krohn, 2013)

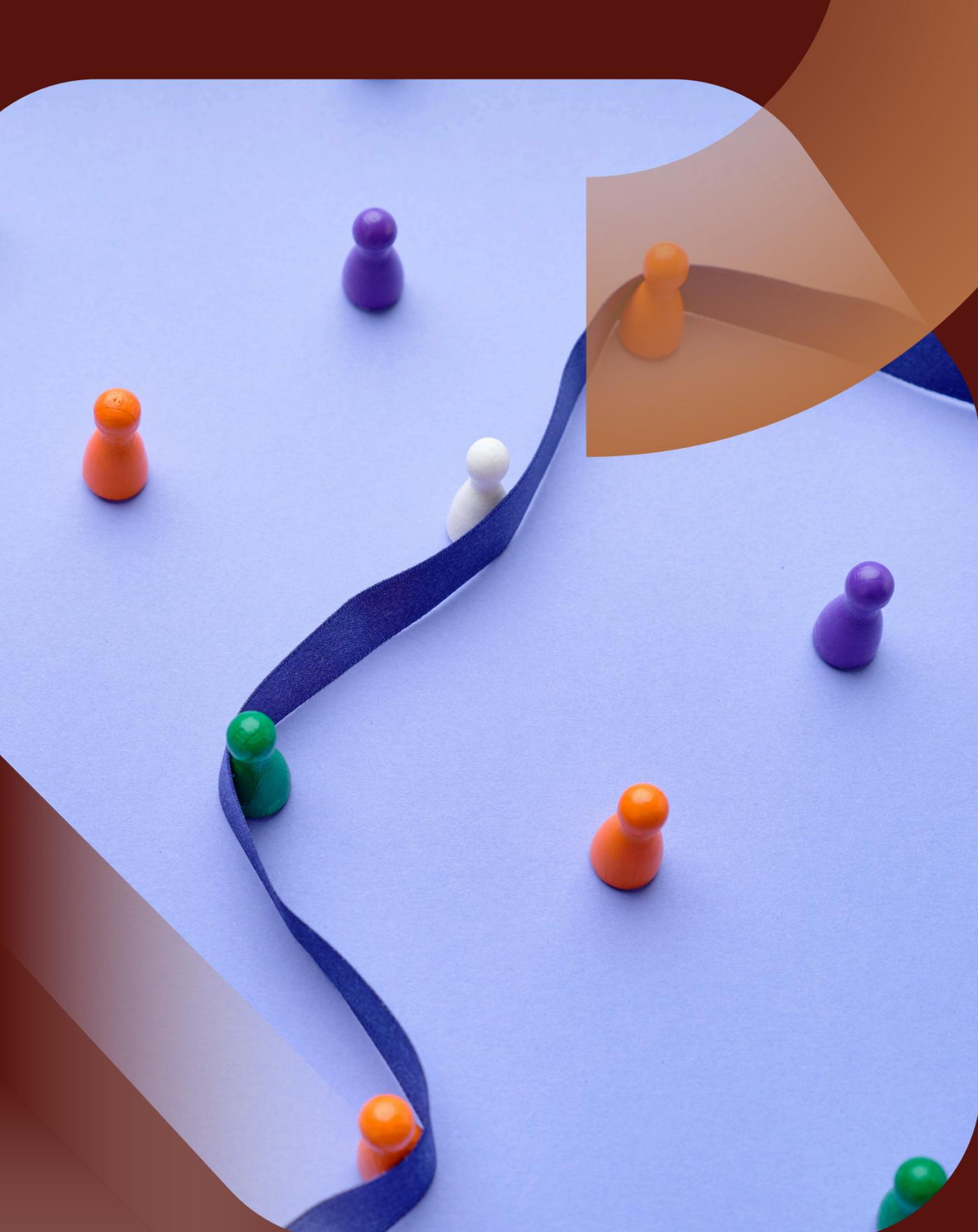
Our Professional Documents Didn't Reflect Our Potential

In the OT Practice Framework (2nd edition) (AOTA, 2008) medication management was burried as a sub category of health management and maintenance, which was described as an IADL.



Sometimes You Need to Advocate Within Your Profession



A photograph of a light blue surface with a dark blue paper path winding across it. Several colorful pushpins (orange, purple, green, white) are scattered around the path. The image is partially obscured by a white rounded rectangle containing the title.

The Power of Professional Policy

3 Types of Official AOTA Documents

POSITION STATEMENTS

Official stance on practice issues

GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS

Comprehensive professional perspective

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Minimal practice requirements

All approved by the Representative Assembly

A close-up photograph of a hand with a ring and a bracelet, raised in a meeting. The background is blurred, showing other people in a room. The hand is positioned on the left side of the frame, with the fingers slightly curled. The background is a soft-focus indoor setting with white shelves and a plant.

How Position Statements Are Created

1. Member creates motion to RA
2. RA approves the motion
3. RA selects expert writing team
4. Paper development and writing
5. Public comment period
6. Revisions based on feedback
7. Final RA vote and approval

Building the Case

**Schwartz & Smith
2017**

Research on OT's
unique skills and value

**Schwartz & Richard
2021**

Documentation of
practice gaps and
barriers

WHO, 2001

Connection to
healthcare policy
priorities (Triple Aim)



Success - The 2017 Position Statement

- **Published:** American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 2017 (AOTA, 2017)
- **Provided:** Clear scope of practice guidance
- **Outlined:** Evidence-based evaluation and intervention approaches
- **Addressed:** Policy implications and advocacy points



OT Practice Framework 4th Edition (AOTA, 2020):

- Health management and maintenance elevated to own section
- Medication management explicitly highlighted

Policy Impact



Research Impact

In 2025, the American Journal of Occupational Therapy noted “medication management” across:

- 116 research articles
- 44 research sessions
- 24 official documents

2+ funded OT-led medication management research studies



Practice Impact

Over time, more occupational therapy practitioners are

- Evaluating medication management
- Using standardized assessments
- Implementing medication management interventions



**WORK IN
PROGRESS**

What we're still working on

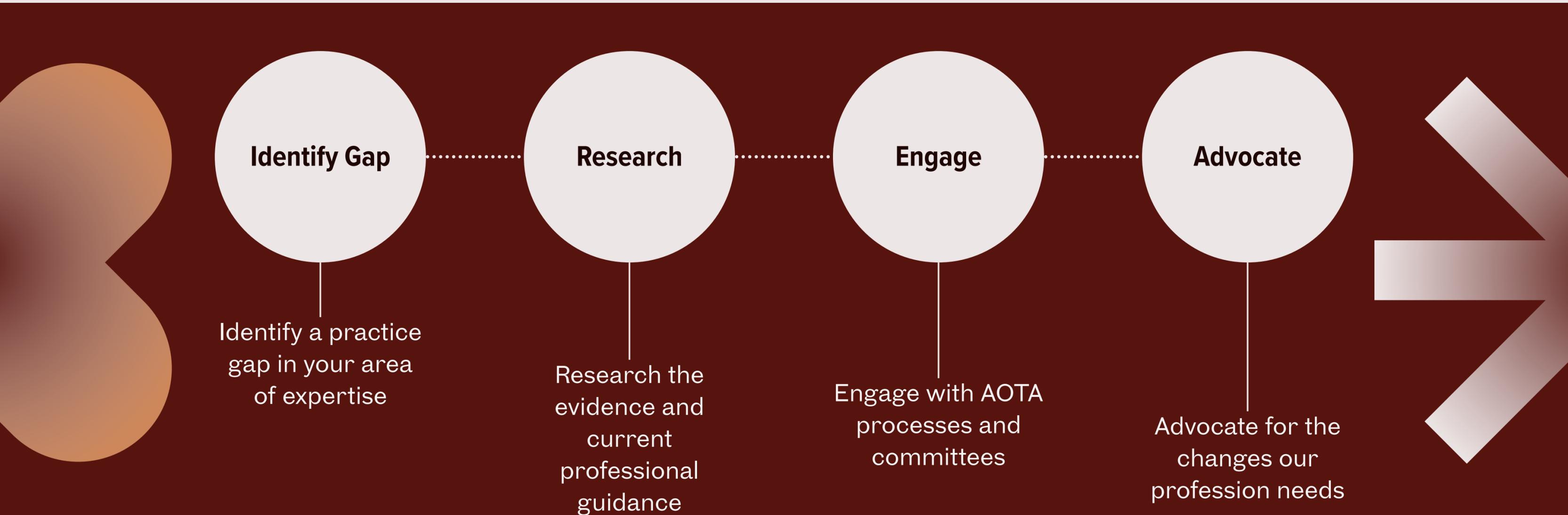
Ongoing Barriers:

- Billing and reimbursement clarity
- Integration with productivity demands
- Documentation requirements
- Interprofessional team buy-in
- Practitioner confidence and knowledge

Solutions in Progress:

- Continued education and training
- Implementation toolkits

The Advocacy Journey



Your Action Steps

- Identify gaps in your practice area
- Engage with AOTA processes and committees
- Attend Representative Assembly meetings
- Submit motions for needed documents
- Provide feedback during comment periods
- Share your expertise and experience



Stay Connected for Ongoing learning



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References
are attached
as a handout